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Which Shall It Be?

Because of the extreme importance of the Dinosaur dam threat, we present these three reprints of articles on the subject. For a brief general account, read "Would you dam Dinosaur National Monument", on page 4. This is reprinted from the March 1954 issue of NATURAL HISTORY magazine. "Dinosaur newsletter, March 25" gives an up-to-date summary of the situation; and "Firing begins in Dinosaur fight" tells about the recent House hearings. These two accounts appeared originally in the March 1954 issue of the SIERRA CLUB BULLETIN.

STACKS

A Great National Park?—or Two Wasteful Dams?

Dinosaur Newsletter, March 25

On March 20, President Eisenhower approved Secretary McKay's recommendation that Echo Park dam be built in Dinosaur National Monument as part of the Upper Colorado Storage Project. Full text of the approval, and the Bureau of the Budget's statement, isn't available yet. The news stories talk of "needed water-resource and power development" and the "strategic location" of Echo Park dam.

In any event, the defense of the National Park System moves to Congress, where we have long expected the battle to be fought. And Congress, ever since the National Park Service was created in 1916, has supported the system.

True, we had hoped for better. The President, in his State of the Union message January 7, had promised to "protect and improve the national parks, monuments . . . ." We believe he has been badly misadvised and that his first official action on a national-park matter now brings one step closer the gravest threat to the National Park System since its creation. That threat could have been pushed back instead. There is ample reason, in the adverse reports of the Army, the Department of Agriculture, the Federal Power Commission, the U.S. Geological Survey, the National Park Service, and conservation organizations all over the land, for pushing back the threat. If alternate sources are needed at all for Echo Park's 6,460,000 acre-feet of storage and 200,000 kilowatts of installed power, the Bureau of Reclamation certainly has not proved there aren't any, and competent engineers have pointed out that the Bureau's own figures show that there are alternatives.

We are forced to infer that the Department of Interior, upon whom the President must rely for staff work in matters of this kind, has itself been taken in by the would-be self-perpetuating core of the Bureau of Reclamation, upon whom Interior must rely for *its* staff work. And the main office of the Bureau of Reclamation has gone along with the figures of its Salt Lake Regional Office, which have been termed "vague and uncertain," "unsound," "preliminary," whose data "fall far short" of what is needed, and whose arithmetic has been demonstrated to be appallingly inaccurate on evaporation loss, alleged to be *the* critical item.

You have to search hard to try to find out how such a jumble can be approved by higher and higher echelons. There seems to be only one conclusion: political considerations have been thought more important than logic. Either or both of the following considerations may be governing: (a) there must be bacon for Upper Basin Congressmen to bring home or someone else takes their seats in a tight race next November, or (b) the private-power curse, result of McKay's action in Hells Canyon and on Rural Electrification, must be compensated for. And it seems to have been concluded that a gargantuan and premature Upper Colorado Storage Project will please more people than will be displeased by an unnecessary invasion of the National Park System and the destruction of the primary value of one of the finest parts of the System. It has apparently been concluded also that conservationists will settle for a consolation prize—$21,000,000 to pretty up a fluctuating Echo Park lake.

We are advised that the President has not been informed of the controversy or the issue. Advisors have shunted your letters and wires off to the Department of the Interior.

Whatever the motives, the President has been misled into reversing, on March 20, what he had promised on January 7 to do.

We believe the vision of January still exists and will become clear again as soon as the President is allowed to know how much the people value their Park System.

The main opportunity nonetheless lies in Congress's continuing its traditional role of protecting the National Park System, a role in which it has been aided by every administration since Lincoln's.

It is up to conservationists to point out what the Bureau of Reclamation would not make clear:

1. Dinosaur dams would destroy the best of Dinosaur, needlessly.

2. We can afford an unimpaired National Park System.

3. The United States can have *both*—needed water and power development, plus the natural, enjoyable beauty of Dinosaur.

4. Echo Park dam, as former Secretary Chapman says, "absolutely is not necessary."

5. Even if Dinosaur weren't much to lose—it is a great deal to lose—the precedent would be extremely dangerous. It is meaningless to deny that it would be a precedent; history could never erase it.

Until you can see for yourself—and can afford the time to dig into the record—we ask you to accept and act upon the consensus of conservationists who have done both.

There is probably rejoicing today in the Utah chambers of commerce—prospects of a huge federal expenditure even though a park dies. It need not die. You and your Congress can reprieve it.

Firing Begins in Dinosaur Fight

by David R. Brower,
Executive Director of the Sierra Club

THE HEARINGS on the Upper Colorado storage project before the House Sub-Committee on Irrigation and Reclamation ran from January 18–28, omitting only Sunday, the 24th. The first two and a half days were given to testimony by the Department of the Interior and the Bureau of Reclamation, supporting the project. There was some confusion here: Interior was supplying information at the Committee's request on three almost identical bills, HR 4443, 4449, and 4463, which called for five dams, whereas Interior had recommended to the President only the Echo Park and Glen Canyon units plus some participating projects, and could not officially support even these before Congress because the Bureau of the Budget (for the President) had not yet given its opinion. The Interior witnesses were closely cross-examined by Congressman John P. Saylor of Pennsylvania, who in this hearing emerged as a new champion of the National Park System.

The remainder of the first week was given to statements by various senators, represen-

tatives, witnesses from Wyoming, Colorado, and Utah, almost all in favor of the project, although Colorado witnesses from opposite sides of the Continental Divide were in severe disagreement. Two witnesses for conservation appeared — Congressman Leroy Johnson (California) and Michael Petruska (New York); they came to testify about a principle and had a fairly rough time at the hands of some committee members in cross-examination about details.

The second week started with witnesses from New Mexico and a minor controversy between New Mexico and Texas about who should have what water.

At 10:30 Tuesday morning, the conservationists presented their first chief witness, General U. S. Grant, III (American Planning and Civic Association) who spoke about general park principles, introduced into the record statements of other engineers pointing out major flaws in the project, and then described in detail various possible alternatives for the Echo Park and Split Mountain sites.

Next main witness was Joe Penfold (Western Representative, Izaak Walton League), who made clear that the principal beauty of Dinosaur would be destroyed, not just altered, by the proposed dams (the opposition has been laboring hard to persuade the committee that Dinosaur would be improved); Penfold's most devastating presentation pertained to water loss: he showed how absurd it was to be worried about an alleged loss of 100 to 200 *thousand* acre feet claimed for the alternate sites, when the Colorado River states were losing 23 *million* acre feet of water a year through wasteful irrigation methods.

Water Loss?

I was the third witness, one of my chief purposes being to show, by citing the Sierra Club river outings, that Dinosaur was neither inaccessible nor its rivers treacherous, but that its beauties could be enjoyed by people of all ages by river as well as by automobile with minor improvement of access roads. I also endeavored to show how wrong Secretary McKay was when he claimed that the dams would not destroy Dinosaur's park values.

Then, using Undersecretary Tudor's figures from his testimony January 18, I pointed out several major errors in Mr. Tudor's arithmetic. The hearing adjourned for the day in the middle of my testimony; when I resumed next morning, a Reclamation engineer (Mr. C. B. Jacobson, Salt Lake) was on hand to check my checking. Three basic Reclamation errors which could not be denied were that Mr. Tudor, in claiming a loss of 165,000 acre feet per year for one of the alternatives (a higher Glen Canyon Dam), had (1) neglected to subtract the 95,000 acre feet of evaporation from the superseded Echo Park and Split Mountain sites; (2) made a 51,000 acre-foot error in computing the new evaporation; and (3) claimed that the alternate dam would have to be 15 feet higher than necessary. From his figures and formulas it could be shown that the evaporation from an alternate that would save Dinosaur was not 165,000 acre feet *more* per year, but would actually be 20,000 acre feet less than at Echo and Split Mountain. The Reclamation Engineer succeeded in confusing the committee enough to cover up part of one of the errors by making a claim which is controverted in Reclamation's own figures. Correction of his error is being made part of the record.

The next witness was Fred Packard, of the National Parks Association, who skillfully stressed the legal and historical aspects of the principle involved. Many other witnesses followed, two of them having come to the hearing at their own expense to testify as individuals — Stephen Bradley (Boulder, Colorado) and Dr. David Bradley (Hanover, New Hampshire). One conservation witness, presumably upset by frequent interruptions of his testimony by committee members, was considered by the committee to be too belligerent and was excused from the witness stand and his testimony deleted.

Park Principle

Immediately after the hearing the club film, "Wilderness River Trail," was shown to those who remained, including three committee members—Aspinall (Colorado), Regan (Texas), and Mrs. Pfost (Idaho).

The most vocal members of the committee, excepting Mr. Saylor, seemed obviously to favor the building of Echo Park dam; a large part of the time allocated on a fifty-fifty basis to conservationists was taken up in questions by these committee members, which amounted more to statements of their beliefs than to questions. By persistent and consistent following of a certain line of questioning, several members of the committee indicated that they were advocates of Echo Park (Miller, Harrison, D'Ewart, Aspinall, Dawson, Regan, Berry, and two regular visitors, Senators Bennett and Watkins (Utah). Mr. Dawson (Utah) repeatedly asked conservation witnesses two questions: Have you been to Dinosaur? Have you polled your membership? And if you had been to Dinosaur, why didn't you go sooner?

It was urged upon the committee that experts from the Corps of Engineers, the Department of Agriculture, and the Federal Power Commission should testify before the committee. General Grant was requested to suggest the names of individuals who should join him before the committee in executive session.

At this writing no one can predict what the committee will do. There is some feeling that the whole project will be held up unless Echo Park dam is deleted. The Bureau of the Budget has not yet made known the Administration's views on the project. There were indications that the Senate would hold hearings on its bill (S. 1555) soon regardless of what the House did. The feeling was expressed that if the bill were recommended to the House of Representatives with Echo Park Dam still in it, it would never pass on the floor. The Utah papers are optimistic, but so are the conservationists! One committee member thinks the committee won't decide before May or June.

Present Estimate Of the Situation

1. If the committee recommends the project including Echo Park dam, conservationists will need to carry the campaign vigorously to the floor of the House, where many members still do not understand the controversy fully — to protesting conservationists they send a mimeographed letter by Mr. Dawson (Utah), author of one of the bills that would dam Dinosaur. Or they send the form letter that Secretary McKay's office mails to those who protested to President Eisenhower. Congressmen doing this seem to have investigated no farther than to ask the proponents of the project if they are for it. More about the Dawson and McKay letters on the next page.

2. If the committee deletes Echo Park dam and recommends the rest of the project, an attempt will probably be made to restore Echo Park by amendment from the floor. So we should still urge Congressmen to investigate for themselves.

3. Chances that the Senate will delete Echo Park dam are poor. But the House may nullify Senate action.

4. Current guess is that the Bureau of the Budget, in spite of serious flaws in the project already pointed out by the Corps of Engineers, Federal Power Commission, and the Department of Agriculture, will authorize the Department of the Interior to present its plan to Congress. Inasmuch as Interior has already supported the project before the House Committee and Secretary McKay is publicly urging Echo Park dam, the function of the Bureau of the Budget here seems academic. Should the Bureau rule the project financially unfeasible and the methods of accounting unacceptable, this would nevertheless be a serious set-back to the project. However, in spite of this type of objection by the Budget Bureau on the Frying Pan-Arkansas project in Colorado, Interior is still strongly advocating that project.

5. If the House and Senate should authorize the invasion of Dinosaur, the bill would still require the approval of President Eisenhower, who has said, "We shall continue to protect and improve our national forests, parks, monuments and other natural and historical sites."

6. If the President should thus reverse himself, authorization would be complete—except that if subsequent legislation were to create a Dinosaur National Park with full protection, the later act, being specific, should have precedence.

7. While authorization would be a severe blow to conservationists, no actual damage could be done until Congress appropriated the money. Mammoth Caves National Park is not yet damaged by the authorized Mining City dam, for which Congress has appropriated no funds.

You'll Read These Arguments Here's How to Answer Them

The mail to Congress, the Interior Department, and the President about Dinosaur has been very heavy. They know that the people care. The dam proponents are trying hard to spread the impression that the people who care about the Park System and Dinosaur don't know what they're talking about. It is important that every conservationist who has already protested should let his congressman—and the Administration—know that the McKay and Dawson letters contains arguments which are not *valid:*

1. *"The Dinosaur bones are safe."*

Correct—but this was never the issue. The answer implies that the monument is in safe hands. Conservationists are talking about the canyons, not the bones.

2. *"This problem has received careful consideration."*

There is no evidence to show that any *new* data about evaporation, alternative sites, or other critical matters were available to Interior. Who made the new basic studies, if any? Were any independent engineers and conservationists asked to check anew into this proposed encroachment of the Park System? The study appears to amount to a single opinion superimposed on material already available, and used now to reverse the previous Secretary's request, December 4, 1952, that the project endangering the Park System be given further study.

3. *"The beauty of the Monument will be by no means destroyed."*

Although Harper's Corner and Limestone Ridge rise 2500 and 3370 feet above Green River, the highest and steepest walls average less than 900 feet; Steamboat Rock is approximately 700 feet high. The maximum reservoir depth here is 500 feet. The average depth in the Yampa arm is 250 feet; in the Green River arm, within the Monument, it is more than 350 feet (at high water).

The "mean head" is 45 feet below the maximum, indicating a planned fluctuation of about 100 feet. The reservoir would destroy the living space, just as a reservoir only 100 or 200 feet deep would destroy the living space of Yosemite Valley. At its average drawdown, Echo Park reservoir would expose more than 10,000 acres of terrain drowned by the high-water level, its beauty silted over, its vegetation destroyed, plus all the life dependent upon that vegetation. If a dry decade required use of all the reservoir's active storage, the 200-foot drawdown would expose more than 33,000 acres (51 square miles) of dead landscape.

The Park Service did not understate when it advised that the effects of Echo Park and Split Mountain Dam would be deplorable.

4. *"With reservoirs, a greater attraction to more people."*

A sheer guess, dismissing the distinction between reservoir recreation and National Park preservation measures required by law. Lake Mead, close to Southern California population centers, attracts two million plus per year, most of them to see man's biggest dam and reservoir. Hetch Hetchy, not so situated (neither is Dinosaur), and a much more beautiful reservoir, receives 1/1000th of the use of Yosemite Valley.

Dinosaur is just being made known. Travel to it is increasing very rapidly. Potentially tens of thousands can see it inexpensively and safely by taking the river trail; and with minimal road improvement, still more thousands can see such places as Rainbow and Island parks, Castle Park, Echo Park, Harper's Corner, etc.

5. *"Too little water—too much evaporation. We need all the water for the full economy of the region."*

The U.S. Geological Survey says of the evaporation study that: "Estimates are based on very meager data as to evaporation of free water surfaces and transfers of data from remote areas in the case of natural losses from the stream. Detailed investigations have not been made . . . ." McKay's claim that sparing Echo would cost 100,000 to 200,000 acre feet per year more evaporation is a guess. According to Tudor's formulas and figures it is fantastically wrong; one of the feasible alternates would evaporate *less* than Echo Park (if Reclamation's basic data are correct).

How full is the "full economy" McKay wants to develop if we must arrive at that full economy without a National Park System? The Colorado River states are losing more than 20 million acre feet of water a year through wasteful irrigation methods. California is the most wasteful.

6. *"The river trip's a risk, out of financial range of the ordinary tourist."*

Risk is relative; it would be risky to run the river in poor equipment without experience just as it is risky to drive on the highway in a jalopy piloted by a novice. Skiing is risky, and reservoir swimming and boating, and bathing at home. The river is as risk-free as life itself if ordinary precautions are taken. Old people, children, and cripples can enjoy this wilderness experience safely. They have done so.

River-trip cost is about $10 a day, including food, well within an ordinary tourist's range.

7. *"Sheer walls preclude roads into most of the scenic areas."*

Access is easily possible to Castle Park, Echo Park, Rainbow Park, Island Park, Lily Park, Gates of Lodore, Split Mountain Gorge, Harper's Corner, Round Top. Trails can make other points accessible and the river reaches many more still.

8. *"Interior proposes a large expenditure to develop recreational potential."*

A multimillion-dollar lock on the barn after the horse is stolen (or drowned). The proposed expenditure equals 75 per cent of the entire 1955 Park Service budget just for this one area.

9. *"Substantial loss in electric generating capacity would result."*

Tudor testified that the alleged loss from evaporation was the only reason for even considering Dinosaur, and McKay admits power loss can be replaced by steam "at some increased cost." The increase in cost is questionable. The trend across the nation is away from hydro-power and toward steam, and steam costs are coming down. Before there is a market for all the storage project power, oil shale and atomic energy may have completely changed the picture, leaving the federal government with a white elephant (Dinosaur?) on its hands.

10. *"The dam wouldn't be a precedent because of a Park Service promise."*

Significantly, Interior has consistently avoided the "promise" argument, which is misleading. The presidential proclamation enlarging Dinosaur provided a Reclamation withdrawal at Brown's Park (since abandoned) extending four miles into the northern tip of the Monument on Green River. That is all. Mr. McKay himself has said: "If I say you can do something on this desk, that does not mean you can do it anywhere in the room." No authorized promise was made; the arguments pro and con were resolved in the proclamation. The Echo Park reservoir would be 200 feet deep at Brown's Park, above which would lie 55 per cent of the reservoir's storage potential (about 12 per cent of the Echo reservoir's maximum acreage would be in deep canyons—the rest out in the open).

In any event, a precedent is a precedent —that which goes before. If local interests, hungry for profit, can invade Dinosaur, there will be a similar lineup, at the borders of most of the other parks, of exploiters well armed with plausible statistics, charts, tables, and experts' reports. Projects are right now in the files to flood portions of the following National Park System areas: Glacier, Grand Canyon, Mammoth Cave, Kings Canyon, and Yellowstone. Conservationists can well insist that every Secretary of the Interior keep his thumb in the dike.

The Basic Question

In 1963 the Colorado River Compact of 1922 is up for re-allocation. There should still be time for the adequate study needed. The Department of Agriculture, the Corps of Engineers, the Federal Power Commission, the U.S. Geological Survey and many others have all raised important questions about the project urged by Reclamation. If these questions have been answered, the public is entitled to know when, by whom, and how thoroughly. There is as yet no evidence of these answers. Over and above these technical questions, important as they are to the nation, is the conservationists' basic question: Why is the Secretary of the Interior not defending the National Park System as the law requires?

The issue which remains after all the statements and counter-statements is this: Shall we keep our National Park System or not? If we don't, we have let down those who saved the system for us as well as those for whom we should be saving it in our own turn.

THE NATURE CONSERVANCY
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The Nature Conservancy is an independent member-governed organization dedicated to saving America's heritage of wild nature. Its specific object is to preserve natural areas as "living museums" of the primeval wilderness. Such tracts are precious for their scientific, educational, and esthetic values. They also afford a home for the multitude of kinds of living things that would otherwise vanish from the earth, destroyed by our civilization.

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Would You DAM Dinosaur National Monument?

By RICHARD H. POUGH
Chairman, Department of Conservation and General Ecology
American Museum of Natural History

THREE identical bills, H.R. 4443, H.R. 4449, and H.R. 4463, now in the hands of the House of Representatives, Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs, would authorize the construction of a series of dams to store water to regulate the flow of the Colorado River and to generate power. One of the dams, Echo Park Dam, would rise 525 feet high in the heart of the Dinosaur National Monument. Its opponents call it, and all the construction scars, power facilities, and buildings that would go with it, an eyesore that has no place in any part of the National Park system. Certainly it can hardly be said that it would enhance the beauty or wilderness quality of the Monument.

It should be made clear that while the original Dinosaur National Monument was established to preserve the interesting beds and the quarry from which so many dinosaur skeletons have been obtained, the present enlarged Monument was established primarily to preserve the incomparable canyons of the Green and Yampa Rivers in all their wild natural beauty. It is these canyons that would be marred by the proposed dams, not the dinosaur quarry, which is farther downstream. The Monument was established with the proviso that the development of water resources within the Monument would be permitted if necessity should arise; but it now appears clear that the development of the Upper Colorado Valley does not require the construction of dams in the Monument.

The Monument has, as yet, been little visited, because Congress has failed to provide the National Park Service with the necessary appropriations to develop access facilities. However, during the past few summers more and more visitors have been enjoying the thrilling, yet perfectly safe, experience of "shooting" these canyons in small boats. The proponents of Echo Park Dam ignore this growing use of the Monument as well as the incongruity of a great modern power dam in such a setting. They claim that the reservoir would provide superior access to what would remain of the partly flooded canyons. To the dam's opponents this seems an expensive way to get the public into an area that would be of questionable attractiveness, unless completely full so that the unsightly muddy and heavily ringed shore line was hidden. As the whole purpose of these dams is to provide water to maintain the flow of the river in non-flood seasons, most visitors would have few illusions that they were anywhere but in just another ugly fluctuating reservoir.

General U. S. Grant III, a distinguished engineer who has given the matter a great deal of study, has demonstrated that six per cent more storage capacity can be obtained at alternate sites at a saving of $54,000,000. It is true that the power-generating capacity would be reduced five per cent and the evaporation loss increased by maybe six per cent. It seems questionable, however, whether it is worth spending over $1200 per acre-foot to save the water that would be lost. In any case, is this slight power and evaporation loss too high a price to pay for the preservation of one of the finest units in the National Park system? Since evaporated water sooner or later comes down again as rain, it can hardly be said to be totally lost.

The case for Echo Park Dam is especially weak at this time, as the other units of the Upper Colorado Storage Project have not yet been authorized or built. As these units would provide all the new storage capacity needed for some years to come, the supposed urgency of Echo Park Dam becomes all the more absurd. Even the alternate dams can hardly be said to be urgently needed for irrigation, when the federal government is having to buy surplus crops to keep them off the market.

The whole concept of our National Park system is at stake in this case. Either we regard the areas entrusted to its care as a sacred trust to be passed on, unblemished, to coming generations as a precious part of our American heritage, or we can expect to have them all artificialized in time when some selfish local group can concoct a plausible enough reason for doing so. This is truly an issue on which no one can be neutral, and it is the duty of every citizen to let The Honorable A. L. Miller, Chairman, House of Representatives Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs, House Office Building, Washington 25, D.C., and his own Congressman, know how he feels about the matter.